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# MUSSER FORESTS, Inc. — INDIANA, PENNA.

— Growers of Thoroughbred Christmas Tree Stock —



Scene at Musser Forests Nursery, showing part of the 8,000,000 TREES THAT GROW!

## Christmas Tree Bulletin

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

## Christmas Trees as a Cash Crop

### General Considerations

For the past twenty years we have been growing and shipping Christmas Trees. We have shipped large quantities to most of the important markets in eastern United States. The business of growing Christmas Trees is in its infancy.

Some people have the mistaken idea that there will soon be an over production of Christmas Trees. During the past number of years, we have inspected practically every source of supply of Christmas Trees in the United States and Canada. We have made a thorough study of the markets and the demand for *QUALITY* trees. From our experience, we are convinced that there will be a very good market for high grade Christmas Trees for a great many years to come. The market for select, *PLANTED PINE* trees is practically unlimited. Although in the past Spruce and Fir trees have been generally used for Christmas trees, *PLANTED PINES* are rapidly replacing them. *ALL PINES* are much faster growing than Spruce. *ALL PINES* retain their long needles and fresh appearance for months after being cut, whereas the short needled trees which are commonly shipped in, begin to shed within a day or two after being decorated.

We offer in this bulletin some of the information we have gathered from our own experience. Although, we have a large acreage growing Christmas Trees, we know that *ALL* we can possibly produce, will not fill even a small part of the demand for quality trees. For this reason,

we do not hesitate to furnish to anyone, any information that we have gathered together over a long period of years. The custom of using Christmas Trees started a great many years ago and will undoubtedly continue to do so, in both good and bad times.

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Scotch Pine seedlings showing difference between tree grown from ordinary seed (left) and one from Musser special strain certified seed (right).



### Species

The most desirable species to plant for Christmas Trees depends upon several factors. First, and probably most important to be considered, is the quality of the soil; second, is the local demand for a certain species of tree; and third, is the question of economy of production.



Scotch Pine plantation seven years old and ready to be cut.

### Scotch Pine

If you already have the land you intend to plant look at its characteristics. Hilly, stony, eroded or otherwise poor land with low moisture content is the logical site for *SCOTCH PINE*. This species will grow in nearly any type of soil. It makes a symmetrical compact tree, *IF SEEDLINGS GROWN FROM THE BEST STRAIN OF SEED ARE USED*. Although comparatively a new tree on the Christmas Tree market, its popularity is increasing each season. Due to its rapid rate of growth while young, Scotch Pine is the most economically produced of the planted trees. In five to seven years it is ready to market. We offer for sale seedlings and transplants grown from the very best strains of Scotch Pine seed.



Christmas Trees cut—ready for bundling. Standing trees in background will be left for timber.

### American Red and White Pine

American Red Pine and White Pine are *HIGHLY* recommended. They require a little better soil than the Scotch Pine, and take a little longer to grow to salable size. However, both Red and White Pine *ALWAYS* hold their rich green colors. They have good straight stems, which are desirable in a Christmas Tree. *THEY TOO* are becoming more popular *EACH YEAR* for a Christmas Tree. They hold their needles for months after being cut. Pruning is not necessary on Scotch, Red or White Pine, but is recommended.

### Other Pines

Banks, Ponderosa, and Austrian Pines may also be grown for Christmas Trees. They are fast growing, have straight stems and hold their good green color. Shearing *IS* necessary on these species.



Two stages in the process of bundling trees with the "Musser Christmas-Tree Baler" for the wholesale market. Trees are bundled, one to six trees per bundle, according to size.

### Spruces

*SPRUCES* have been used for years. These have been wild trees taken from the northern woods, and in general are very much inferior to planted trees in shape and appearance. Spruce requires a rich, moist soil and the species are much slower growing than the pines. Due to the fact that the needles begin to shed from a cut tree within a few weeks, they cannot be placed upon the market in a fresh condition, unless cut at the last minute. Spruce is, however, unexcelled as a *LIVING* Christmas Tree. Furthermore, we cannot discount the fact that, a bushy, well-shaped planted Spruce will always be very much in demand. All varieties of Spruce are in demand as ornamental trees. Spruce may be pruned if desired, but is not necessary.



## Plant Several Species

A mixture of species in the same plantation is the most desirable method of planting. With a variety of species to offer, you will undoubtedly make additional sales. Also different species have different rates of growth making it possible to harvest more crops from the same plantation.

We would suggest a planting of 70% pines, and 30% spruces. You may have several varieties of both species depending on your particular soil and climate conditions.

You will find it will pay you well when marketing time comes.



Bundled Christmas Trees leave plantation by team and wagon. Standing trees will be left for timber.

## Preparation of the Planting Site

We recommend no preparation of soil before planting. The added expense is usually not justified, and often a light growth of grass and weeds is actually beneficial to the growth of young trees since they offer shade and moisture retention during the early stages of the plantation. If you intend to cultivate your trees after planting it will be necessary to plow the site first.

## Planting

When growing trees are spaced too closely together they crowd, and the resulting competition speeds up the height growth but tends to make the trees thin and thus poor Christmas Trees. The best shaped trees will be grown by spacing far enough apart that they do not interfere with each other. However, it is economical to speed up the growth somewhat, and it is advisable to utilize all the land. Through years of experimenting we have arrived at an average spacing of four feet as being best for all Christmas Tree plantings. Planting is done as with any forest trees. Directions accompany our price list literature.



Bundled trees ready to be trucked or loaded on railroad cars.

## Pruning or Shearing

Pruning or shearing is recommended for growing all varieties of *PINE* Christmas Trees. It develops a solid, extra heavy branched and bushy tree. This procedure will produce a premium tree that will command the very highest prices. Pruning is done at about the fourth year, and *BEFORE* the *NEW* tender growth starts to get tough and woody. It is usually done between June 1st and July 31st. Pruning is an easy thing to do, one man using long shears can prune at least fifty (50) trees per hour. Trim off about one half of the *NEW* growth made during one season. Later in the season many new buds will form which will produce many more branches the following year. Also shape the tree to a symmetrical form.

Except for pruning, no care or cultivation is necessary.



Christmas Trees go by railroad car to distant cities. Two to four thousand trees per car.

## Harvesting

The trees of a Christmas Tree plantation do not all arrive at merchantable size the same year. As soon as some are of suitable size they should be cut and marketed. The following year more will be ready. Where much land is available it is a good plan to combine reforestation

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with the Christmas Tree cutting. Under this system you will plant a new tract each year, and as they become of age to harvest, cut only 50% of the trees leaving the remainder grow on into timber. This 50% may be cut over a period of three or four years, but in that time you will have several tracts to cut over.

### Marketing

Your particular marketing conditions will determine the manner in which you will handle your cutting operations. Some growers merely market their trees on the ground. The customer selects his tree, you cut it and he takes it home. Or you may sell trees on the stump to a dealer who comes in and cuts his trees. If you retail your trees on a lot or sell in small amounts to other dealers the cut trees may be transported loose on a truck or wagon. However, if you intend to ship trees, or truck them long distances, they should be baled. This amounts to tying

several trees together, and binding the branches down flat on the main stem. This allows many more trees to be loaded in the same space, and tends to protect them from damage and breakage while handling them. Many ingenious devices have been constructed for aiding in tree baling, but as yet none have been placed on the market.

Marketing a Christmas Tree crop must be done within about four weeks of the year. Conditions vary somewhat throughout the country, but usually you can expect a strong market for your product. You will no doubt have competition from "shipped in" wild trees, but experience has shown that planted trees sell when others do not. They also command a much better price throughout. This fact is very obvious when you compare the quality of the two types of tree.

Address questions regarding Christmas Tree Cultivation to MUSSER FORESTS, Inc., Indiana, Pa. We shall be glad to help you with your problems in any way possible.

# Be Wise! PLAN NOW for after-war Prosperity!

LET NATURE WORK FOR YOU. PLANT NOW. REAP MARKET VALUES IN 4 TO 8 YEARS. ALMOST BEFORE YOU KNOW IT.



A beautiful SCOTCH PINE. Long needles on branches, as well as twigs are typical.

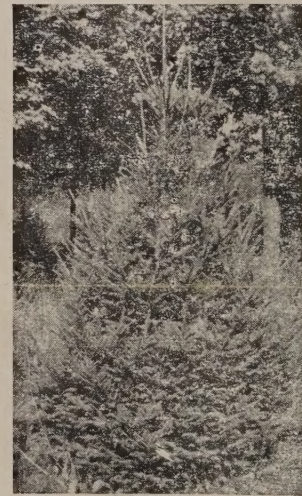
• Over 40,000,000 Christmas Trees used in the United States each year.

• Original sources of supply are rapidly decreasing and quality is becoming more inferior.

• Christmas Tree growing is highly profitable.

• Average wholesale price over long period of years, 50 cents per tree.

• WHEN RAISING CHRISTMAS TREES, IT IS MUCH BETTER TO PLANT 1000 CERTIFIED, HIGH QUALITY TREES THAN TO PLANT 3000 or 4000 LOW GRADE PLANTS.



NORWAY SPRUCE. A very symmetrical tree, always holding a rich, deep green color.

For Further Information Write

## MUSSER FORESTS, Inc. ★ INDIANA, PENNA.